

Notes of meeting of Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan Group (SNPG) with Stroud District Council (SDC) Planning Strategy, 10 October 2016

Present: SNPG: John Callinan (JC), John Jeynes (JJ), Carol Kambites (CK), Clare Sheridan (CS), Rachel Russell – Committee Clerk (RR)

SDC: Conrad Moore (CM), Ricardo Rios (RRios)

Apologies: Vicky Redding, Terry Webb

1. Standard responses from organisations

- a) Some lengthy but standard responses to consultation on the draft Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan (NP) were received. SNPG sought advice on how these should be shown in the Consultation Statement.
- b) RRios advised that, ideally SNPG should check standard guidance to see if any could apply to the draft NP. There is no need to show the full text of a standard letter within the table of consultation responses as long as there is a link to the full text e.g. PDF.
- c) RR advised that, on advice from SDC, SNPG had sought advice from some agencies (Gloucestershire County Council, Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England). Advice from Natural England in particular had informed environment policy development.

2. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and s106 contributions

- a) SDC provided written comments that requests for developer contributions should be supported by evidence of an agreed, costed and deliverable project.
- b) CK pointed out that this was not possible for a policy on improving links to the town centre should development happen.
- c) R Rios advised that the wording could be:
“Improvements to cycleways will be promoted....” Or
“Developments that provide xxxx will be supported....”
i.e a promotional policy rather than setting a requirement for a developer to provide infrastructure
- d) There are two ways in which a developer will provide infrastructure:
S.106 – solutions for a site
CIL contributions for infrastructure across the District
- e) CM suggested possible wording: “seek opportunities to improve connectivity as developments arise”. CM gave example from the Local Plan of an indicative cycle route around Cam and Dursley; developers contribute to parts of this. No cost has been given for whole project.
- f) Krista Harris has list of s106 projects from Town and Parish Councils.
- g) JC asked for clarification of roles of Local Plan and NP. R Rios advised that NP should add local detail to Local Plan.
- h) JC said that green spaces were an important asset to Stonehouse; R Rios advised that Local Green Space designation was one way in which NP could protect green space. (Harwicke NP group have done good work on Local Green Space).
- i) JJ said that although the West of Stonehouse housing allocation is next to the existing town and Stonehouse supports 40% of industry in the District, Stonehouse does not look set to benefit from District funded e.g. CIL funded infrastructure improvements.
- j) CK asked for clarification on how the NP could seek to influence District Level CIL spending as this was part of the intent behind draft NP policy PP1. One of the most popular requests during

public consultation was the re-opening of Bristol Road station, a project that would benefit the whole district and need significant funding.

- k) RRios advised that advice from examination of other Plans was that PP1 was not a land use policy. There is no point in raising unrealistic expectations and probably the best way to influence the District Council CIL spending was through Town Council engagement.
- l) CM advised that the study by the County Council on the re-opening of the station needs further work. SDC not an infrastructure provider and needs to work with other partners such as Network Rail, rail companies and County Council.
- m) RRios suggested that parishes can offer some of their CIL allocation. JJ pointed out that Stonehouse is unlikely to gain much CIL due to lack of development space; West of Stonehouse not subject to CIL and falls largely outside the Stonehouse parish, therefore Stonehouse won't receive infrastructure improvements required by a large development. RRios advised that the Local Plan Review will look at infrastructure needs as West of Stonehouse develops.
- n) RR suggested that it would be useful to keep a list of priority projects identified during consultation in the NP. The Town Council could hold and update the list of all projects identified for possible funding by developers. RRios advised that the emerging Kingswood NP has an example of a similar section.
- o) JC suggested that as Wycliffe is a major holder of green space in the town, non-Wycliffe green land is important.

Way forward with CIL in NP (discussed by SNPG after meeting):

Separate chapter – Priority Projects

Use introduction and some of justification from PP1

List of projects to be taken account of by Town Council who will hold CIL/s 106 list as in Appendix 1; no need for repetition of para under theme heading.

3. Separate responses from Stroud District Council Planning and Asset Management

- a) SNPG members asked why separate consultation responses were received from SDC Planning and Asset Management with the latter being written by the same consultants who drafted responses on behalf of Robert Hitchins.
- b) RRios advised that roles of Planning and Asset Management are different. Planning has to advise NP groups how to succeed; Asset Management responds as a land owner. SNPG should treat its responses as it would those from any other developer. SDC Asset Management had decided to seek independent advice.
- c) RRios agreed that SNPG's current approach of responding to many of the Asset Management consultation responses by referring to SNPG responses to SDC planning was acceptable.

4. Rewriting Policies

a) ENV2: Blue and Green Infrastructure Network

CK explained that part of the point of the policy was to highlight the value of the network as a whole.

RRios explained that SDC Planning's concerns about the policy included:

- The creation of the idea that there is a specific designation for the network as a whole.
- The sites linked by the network serve very different purposes – should people be carrying out recreational activities in a Key Wildlife Site.

CM said there could be multiple uses within a network of green and blue infrastructure e.g. the verges of paths used recreationally can be good for biodiversity.

RRios advised policy should be reworded to:

- Identify where connections are, the value of those connections, how they work together.
- Identify sites and their current purpose/level of protection
- Identify how connectivity could be enhanced and improved
- Avoid using words like “protection” which implies a designation. Use “supported” rather than protected.

CM advised linking to Local Plan Policy ES6 (Biodiversity Policy).

CK suggested that links to sites which don't currently have much protection are important.

b) H1 Local Needs Housing (Dwelling Size and Type) and H2 Local Needs Housing in Stonehouse
SNPG do not want to limit the application of these policies to “infill” development as they will not then apply to any larger developments which may arise in the Plan period.

RRios advised that NPs not expected to contribute to wider development aims of Local Plan, therefore it could be seen as logical that these policies only apply to infill development i.e. development additional to that allocated in Local Plan.

c) ENV8: Provision of Private Outdoor Amenity Space

RR checked that SDC did not want to comment on this; no comment received from SDC during draft NP consultation but R Hitchins and Asset Management did comment.

CM advised policy not overly onerous and drafted to give flexibility. He advised that SDC are developing an ES1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) checklist which would include space standards. The policy could perhaps refer to ES1.

d) T5: Proximity of New Development to Facilities and Services

RRios advised that threshold of “10 or more dwellings” important (met by reference to Local Plan policy E112).

No need to have requirement for Design and Access statement etc. Town Council can monitor compliance with this policy. Or “compliance should be demonstrated in a Design and Access statement....*where one is required.*”

CM: ES1 checklist will include accessibility requirements and will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document.

JC asked if Local Plan proving robust. CM replied that it went through a thorough examination. Important challenge currently re housing in Berkley – will be test of robustness.